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ABSTRACT

A model for preservice and inservice teacher self-assessment, which fosters improved performance, is divided into two phases. Phase 1 begins at the preservice level, and phase 2 is carried out during the time the teacher is under contract in a school setting. During phase 1, the teacher candidate explores the answers to three questions in coursework: (1) How can effective teaching be defined? (2) What constitutes clear, meaningful standards (criteria) of effective teaching? and (3) What would be an appropriate method (process) for self-assessment? Each teacher candidate explores available literature and research through six instructional modes: (1) becoming familiar with the self-assessment concept; (2) exploring effective teaching practice; (3) identifying standards for effective teaching; (4) analyzing teacher behavior; (5) designing a self-assessment system; and (6) implementing a self-assessment system. The second part of phase 1 is implementation of the self-evaluation system during student teaching. Phase 2 deals with inservice teachers. Each school district should develop a comprehensive plan of evaluation. In due time, the first year teacher develops a personal approach to self-assessment within district guidelines. (JMK)

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LINKING PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT: A MODEL FOR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

A Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the
ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS
New Orleans, January 30, 1984

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LINKING PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT: A MODEL FOR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone is aware that the public schools are being subjected to criticism. This fault finding is not directed at any one facet of the public school's efforts, but at a range of activities from appropriation of monies to what should be included in the curriculum for a zoology course. The quality of teaching and the kind and amount of learning that goes on in the classroom, however, is at the center of this storm of protest.

If we believe at all in the process of schooling, we must believe that the process can be improved. Most teachers (and others) would agree that ultimately, instructional improvement must take place in the individual classrooms. Teachers also agree that they must continually upgrade their instructional approaches and that they should take a large share of the responsibility for renewal. There are, traditionally, several roadblocks that hamper self-improvement.

Over the years, somehow, teachers have been infected with the idea that improvement was something done to them, that the responsibility is not theirs for upgrading their skills, attitudes and knowledge. (It is a similar condition that exists with students in the classroom when they say, "I'm here, so teach me. You're the teacher, my responsibility is to be here, that's about all.") Still another hurdle to teacher self-improvement is the fact that very few teachers have even been given any formal training, let alone encouragement, in assessing their own performance. How can we expect teachers to engage in self-help without the opportunity to develop a positive attitude toward this process and learn a set of skills that will aid them in self-assessment? The process does not occur through chance. It requires a well developed program, in order to bring about positive results. The model presented below is an attempt

to provide the framework for a program that will lead to effective self-appraisal.

DEFINITION

Self-assessment may be defined as, "An objective and systematic process of self-appraisal, the purpose of which is instructional improvement." The focus in this process would be on the formative evaluation concept as opposed to the summative evaluation approach. Formative evaluation keynotes development and involves diagnosis, improvement strategies, data gathering through low inference means, analysis and change or maintenance tactics. It is designed to foster improved performance.

PREMISES

The model described in this paper is based on certain premises. We know that teachers generally don't like outside appraisal. That assessment can be a frightening experience. We also know that some form, formal or informal, of evaluation is inescapable. If we believe that teachers, in the final analysis, do make the difference in classrooms and in students' learning, then the process and approach to helping them be more effective must change. Self-assessment seems to have some promise of becoming a positive force in faculty development. The model then is based on these premises:

- Current standards for assessing what is effective teaching are vague and ambiguous.
- Current appraisal techniques fall short of characterizing teachers' performance.
- Current assessment practices depend too much on an external appraiser.
- Current appraisal sessions are conducted too infrequently.
- Teachers view current practices as interfering with, rather than nurturing professional spirit.

- Accountability for effective teaching should become a part of the teacher's professional responsibility.
- Evaluations should be participatory.
- A positive climate favorable toward professional improvement should be developed and maintained.
- Evaluations should be based on mutual commitment to growth and change.
- Teachers can learn the skills necessary to practice self-assessment.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for this self-assessment model are:

- To aid each professional to become aware of his/her part in the total teaching/learning process.
- To aid each teacher and teacher candidate to realize the need for personal and professional growth and improvement.
- To educate each teacher and teacher candidate in a systematic design for actualizing self-assessment for improvement.
- To supervise the implementation of teacher and teacher candidate self-assessment.
- To promote a positive-professional attitude toward the evaluation process.
- To improve learning as a result of improving teacher effectiveness.

THE MODEL

The model is divided into two phases. Phase one begins at the pre-service level and phase two is carried out during the time the teacher is under contract in a school setting.

Phase one. As a part of each teacher candidate's program, he/she would be engaged in formal course work that would lead to competency in the analysis and evaluations of his/her own teaching performance. Essential to development of this competency would be in-depth exploration of the answers to three basic questions.

- How can effective teaching be defined?

- What constitutes clear, meaningful standards (criteria) of effective teaching?

- What would be an appropriate effective method (process) for self-assessment?

Each teacher candidate would explore extensively the literature and research available to come to answers for each of the questions listed above. This exploration would be accomplished through instructional modules. They are:

- Becoming Familiar with the Concept of Self-Assessment--The intent here is to provide background information on self-appraisal and to develop positive attitudes toward the practice.

- Exploring Effective Teaching Practices--In this module the focus would be on the nature of the instructional process and identification of the kinds of evidence that are necessary to make reasonable judgments about what effective instruction is.

- Identifying Standards for Effective Teaching--In this module students would be asked to define areas of responsibility for classroom teachers, to form specific statements of job functions and to develop criteria to be used to determine accomplishment of these functions. Standards can be highly individualized and/or institutionalized.

- Analyzing Teacher Behavior--Targeted here would be the concepts of systematic observation, observation instrument construction and interaction analysis.

- Designing a Self-Assessment System--Each student in this module would develop his/her own approach to self-assessment.

- Implementation of a Self-Assessment System--In this module students would gain assistance in implementation of their system during the student teaching phase of their program.

The instructional modules could be developed to be used as a course, as a part of a course or as independent study. In all modes, input should be given to each student by other students, college faculty and public school personnel. The purpose of this input is to help the candidate develop a practical-effective system.

The second part of phase one is implementation of the self-evaluation system during student teaching. The university supervisor and public school cooperating teacher give expert advice and help in the implementation and evaluation of the system. (See figure 1.)

Phase two deals with in-service teachers. Each school district should develop a comprehensive plan of evaluation. (If they haven't done so.) The plan should include an overall policy for evaluation and that policy should include such areas as philosophy, definitions, performance standards, procedures, instruments, timetables and means for in-service for administrators and teachers.

If the district plan has not dealt with the three basic questions cited in phase one, they should determine answers for each of them. As the beginning teacher starts his/her work, an important part of their induction-orientation would be to become thoroughly familiar with the evaluation system. In-service sessions would be conducted specifically for this purpose.

In due time the first year teacher would develop a personal approach re: self-assessment - within the guidelines provided by the evaluation policy. The administrator(s) and others responsible for the development of a teacher would work hand-in-hand in this process.

During the school year the teacher and administrator would monitor the program and process for progress and needed revision. (See figure 2.)

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The intent of this model is to point to each individual teacher candidate and in-service teacher as being responsible and accountable for the improvement of their instruction. In this way, the focus is on the classroom--the proving ground for any viable improvement.

This model focuses on formative evaluations--the development of staff. It is not meant to supplant summative evaluation, though the two are not intrinsically distinct.

Figure 1

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH SELF-ASSESSMENT

PHASE ONE - PRE-SERVICE

FORMAL COURSE WORK

Course work is designed to answer three questions:

- How to define effective teaching.
- How to establish clear, meaningful standards of effective teaching.
- How to develop an appropriate-effective process for self-assessment.

through six instructional modules;

- Becoming familiar with the concept of self-assessment.
- Exploring effective teaching practices.
- Identifying standards for effective teaching.
- Analyzing teacher behavior.
- Designing a self-assessment system.
- Plans for implementing a self-assessment program.

STUDENT TEACHING

Implement fully self-assessment system.

Note: System is monitored and evaluated by the co-operating teacher and university supervisor.

Figure 2

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH SELF-ASSESSMENT

PHASE TWO - IN-SERVICE

IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS

NOTE: Each district would address the three basic questions cited in figure 1, if they haven't done so.

- Each new teacher will be thoroughly informed of the district's evaluation program.
- In-service sessions are conducted to aid the teacher in the self-assessment process.
- Teachers, after the initial orientation, develop a personal program of self-appraisal within the guidelines of the district's evaluation policy.

ONGOING

- Teachers implement their program of self-assessment.
- Program is monitored by the teacher, administrative staff and others.
- Continuous program evaluation and revision.

It is hoped that a model of this design would create a positive attitude set for the self-assessment early in the career of a teacher and the skills necessary to practice self-improvement. It is hoped that it will bring teachers and administrators closer together in a meaningful way so that a sense of fulfillment and high morale will prevail. It is further hoped that this model would provide a means of authentic appraisal and thus improvement of instruction and learning.